

[Memories of Lincoln Told]

Interview (?)

JUN 18 1936

Clay W. Vaden, Field Writer,

Project #65-1700-J

[Quemado?], N.M.

MEMORIES OF LINCOLN TOLD Hillsboro's Hillsboro Woman's Father Was President's Partner In the picturesque little village of Hillsboro, New Mexico, there lived until a few years ago Mrs. Elizabeth Herndon Hall, daughter of William H. Herndon, Abraham Lincoln's law partner. She and a brother were identified with that locality since the formation of Sierra County, more than forty years ago.

When in a reminiscent mood Mrs. Hall with her earliest recollections gave a vivid, realistic picture of the historic law offices of Lincoln and Herndon, for she remembered having gone there often as a child. It was a large back room on the second floor of a brick building opposite the courthouse in Springfield, Illinois; the windows looked out onto shed roofs and back yards.

Usually, there were half a dozen men present smoking, with their feet on the table. At one side stood an old sofa with some of its broken springs protruding thru the black horsehair cover: there were bookcases to hold the much used books and an old fashioned secretary. Someone has remarked, "The furniture wasn't much, but the room was well equipped with brains."

Library of Congress

It was there the "Great Emancipator" conceived and nourished the ideas which bore fruit when he became president and it was there C 18 - N. Mex

2

Herndon, the enthusiastic, radical Abolitionist, planned the speeches and formulated the arguments which caused him to be recognized as the most useful adherent to the cause in the West.

The partnership between my father and Mr. Lincoln, according to Mrs. Hall, was never formally dissolved. When the President left Springfield for the White House he told her father: "Leave the old sign, Billy, and when I come back from Washington, we'll go on with the law business."

Herndon worked with Lincoln when he was a member of the firm of Lincoln and Logan and when Lincoln dissolved his partnership with Logan he invited young Herndon to become his partner. The two men, also, had roomed together in the early thirties in New Salem.

Herndon was an ardent abolitionist and followed closely the actions of his partner. After Lincoln's death he was one of the few men to possess a complete chronological file of Lincoln's speeches with the dates and places of their deliveries. He worked diligently and traveled extensively to collect material on his former partner and in the early eighties, collaborating with Jesse W. Weik, wrote "Herndon's Lincoln," and in 1892 prepared a revised edition.

Mrs. Hall's brother, Beverly Herndon, of Kelvin, Arizona, also remembers Lincoln. He was 15 years old when he heard Lincoln deliver his farewell address on the day he left for the White House.

(Source of information: an interview with the late Mrs. Hall)